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ABSTRACT

A survey of the faculty and students of the University of Akron (Ohio) School of Law was conducted to ascertain their use and perceptions of the efficiency of the School of Law Library. Results demonstrate the importance of the library in meeting the information and research needs of both groups. Several common threads of dissatisfaction are voiced by the students through these questionnaires and both groups offer suggestions to increase the library's future effectiveness. One-fifth of the student respondents feel they make poor use of the library due to a lack of understanding of its resources. Students and faculty both suggest that more ongoing bibliographic instruction would increase effective use of the library. Both groups of respondents rate the staff, particularly the reference librarians, as a great strength of the library. An overview of the library's holdings and services is included, and sample questionnaires and cover letters are appended. Twelve tables illustrate the demographics of the respondents and study results. (Contains 12 references.) (BEW)

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A SURVEY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON SCHOOL OF LAW LIBRARY

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the
Kent State University School of Library Science
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Marguerite Beck Frey

April, 1995

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ABSTRACT

A survey of the faculty and students of the University of Akron School of Law was conducted to ascertain their use and perceptions of the effectiveness of the School of Law Library. This was done through the use of questionnaires specifically designed for each of these target groups.

Results clearly show the importance of the Law Library as a resource in meeting the information and research needs of both students and faculty. Several common threads of dissatisfaction are voiced by the students through these questionnaires and both groups offer suggestions to increase the library's future effectiveness. One-fifth of the student respondents feel they make poor use of the library due to a lack of understanding of its resources. Students and faculty both suggest that more ongoing bibliographic instruction would increase effective use of the library. Further analysis of the data suggests that while both groups generally give the library a good rating, they are more satisfied with the library staff than with its sources and services. Both groups rate the staff and especially the reference librarians as a great strength of the library.

It is hoped that the results of the study may be used by the library as a tool in future budget planning and decision making.

Master's Research Paper by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The University of Akron School of Law was founded in 1921 as an independent evening law school which merged with the University in 1959. Today it has a full-time teaching faculty of twenty-four with an enrollment of 408 day and 154 evening course students working toward the degree of Juris Doctor or a joint degree in tax, urban planning, public administration or business administration. The entire School of Law is located in one building except for the legal clinic which is housed across the street.

The Law Library is an integral part of the School of Law program and the law librarian reports to its dean. The law librarian and associate law librarian teach Legal Research, a required course for every law student. In this course, students receive instruction in the use of print and online legal materials.

The library contains 45,000 titles with 220,000 volumes of print, microform, audio and visual formats including basic legal materials for the federal government and every state and US territory. US Supreme Court and state court records and briefs are also available. The library is a federal government depository for legal materials. Access to the Westlaw and Lexis online databases is available through microcomputers provided by the vendors, and several PCs are available for student use for word processing. The main university library with holdings of more than 2.8 million is within walking distance of the School of Law.

As part of the University of Akron library system, the catalog was converted in 1993 to the Innovated Interfaces Innopac system to comply with OhioLink standards. This is the first time the Law Library's holdings have been on a computerized system. This transition is still taking place as the acquisitions and cataloging departments work to update the holdings.

The Law Library staff consists of five full-time librarian positions, six support staff and twenty student assistants. Due to budget cuts and staff resignations, however, the library was forced to operate between July 1992 and December 1994 with only three or four librarians.

The advent of the information age and competition from electronic and private information brokers has changed the role of the librarian and the academic library. In addition, Richard DeGennaro warns that, because of necessary budget cuts for most academic institutions, the days of measuring a library's effectiveness by its size and expenditure statistics are over. He states, "It is time to put quality and user satisfaction ahead of big numbers as the goal and guiding concept of library management" (DeGennaro 1980, 95).

A user satisfaction study of the Law Library has never been conducted. Necessary budget cuts and changes coupled with DeGennaro's warning underscore the importance of such a study to be used for future planning.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study is to measure the effectiveness of the Law Library as perceived by the School of Law faculty and students. The survey itself may also serve as a tool by which the target groups are reminded of services provided by the library which they may not take advantage of adequately or at all.

It is hoped that this survey will be useful towards the library's goal of providing quality services and information and that the results can serve as a planning tool on which future budgets and other important decisions may be based.

Limitations of the Study

This study is limited to the faculty and students at the University of Akron School of Law. Findings, therefore, cannot necessarily be generalized to all law libraries.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Effective long-range planning for an academic library must focus on the needs of those whom it was meant to serve. One of the most widely used methods for discerning those needs is to survey the users, most often through the use of a questionnaire. This method is generally less time-consuming and costly than others such as the interview method, which is labor-intensive in that it requires a great deal of time both for the interviewer and the subjects.

A review of the current survey literature of academic libraries reveals popularity of the use of questionnaires to measure the effectiveness of library service. However, this literature also cautions against putting too much faith in poorly constructed questionnaires.

Bookstein (1985) and Kidston (1985) warn that even simple words vary greatly in meaning and intensity from person to person and these differences cannot by distinguished in a written survey. Frequency words such as "often" and "rarely," and phrases such as "using the library" can be interpreted flexibly and render a questionnaire invalid. In addition, Bookstein suggests a common sampling fault which occurs when it is not known how the opinions of those who do not return questionnaires differ from those who do.

Despite these concerns, a well-constructed questionnaire can serve as a valuable tool in the evaluation of the effectiveness of library service as measured by user perceptions.

Butler and Gratch (1982) argue that a user study can be a valuable tool in future planning for library programs and services, but in order for the study to be effective, it must be well planned with the goals and objectives of the library providing the direction. Schlichter and Pemberton (1992) add that studies which focus on user awareness or on a

specific problem are generally more effective for planning use than those which solicit general user perceptions. In addition, attention to the responses of infrequent or non-library users is critical since their needs are clearly not being met.

Durfee (1986), in her study of student awareness of academic library reference services, constructed questions which determined students' awareness of and desire for thirteen reference services. She concluded that many services would be used more fully if students knew they were available. Budd and DiCarlo (1982) constructed a study where faculty and student respondents were asked to estimate the importance of and rate the library's performance in significant areas of service. In so doing they were able to target specific areas for improvement of existing services.

Whitlatch (1983) noted the general university shift towards more part-time faculty and students and studied the library use patterns among these groups with the finding that those who were part-time felt much less of a need of the library for research purposes.

Along this same line, Davis and Bentley (1979), in their research of three academic institutions, found that teaching faculty members with the least amount of time at an institution are the most dissatisfied with the library and its services. Schloman, Lilly and Hu (1989) in their study of faculty use of the library at Kent State University agreed with this finding and added that all faculty were generally more satisfied with library administration and staff than with the adequacy of the collection. These findings coupled with the 1970 study by Allen, which showed that use of the library by faculty can be a major factor in the use of the library by students, suggests that a staff which focuses its efforts and services on newer faculty can greatly influence student use of the library as well.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The primary mission of the Law Library is to serve the students and faculty of the School of Law. These groups served as the target groups of the study. Questionnaires designed specifically for each group were used (see Appendix A). These were tested on a small group prior to general distribution to identify any ambiguities or other problems. All full-time teaching faculty members received a copy of the questionnaire and cover letter (see Appendix B) in their mailboxes. Likewise, all students received the student questionnaire and cover letter via their mailboxes in hopes that at least 100 would be returned.

Results of the questionnaire were tallied and analyzed using the EDD and SAS programs on the Kent State University main frame computer. Analysis was made to ascertain which areas in the library are perceived as most important and which may need further funding or changes.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The questionnaires were distributed to faculty and students during the first week of the second semester. Several weeks after distribution, and following a second distribution of questionnaires to faculty, the posting of signs, and class and informal announcements which were made requesting better participation, the results of the ninety-one student (16.2%) and eleven faculty (45%) responses were tallied. These responses revealed some common threads of dissatisfaction and pointed out perceived strengths of the library.

It is significant to report that a higher percentage of day students than evening students returned questionnaires (see Table 1). In addition, 82.5% of the responses received were from day students. In this paper, responses from all students are grouped together regardless of day or evening status. As reported in Table 2, the faculty responses came primarily (54.6%) from those with seventeen or more years experience at the Law School.

Although the questionnaires were specifically tailored to each target group, many questions are similar and are discussed together, with significant differences noted.

TABLE 1
STUDENT STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

Status	Frequency	Percent
Day students		
First year	27	29.6
Second year	23	25.3
Third year	25	27.5
Evening students		
First year	0	0.0
Second year	3	3.3
Third year	8	8.8
Fourth year	5	5.5
Total	91	100.0%

TABLE 2
FACULTY STATUS OF RESPONDENTS

Number of years on faculty	Frequency	Percent
1-4	2	18.2
5-8	1	9.0
9-12	2	18.2
13-16	0	0.0
17-20	3	27.3
20+	3	27.3
Total	11	100.0%

Each target group was given a list of possible sources of information for their assignments, research or professional needs, and were asked to rank those which they used in order of importance. The students and faculty both rate the Law Library as their primary source of information for class assignments, research or professional needs, with online resources from home, work or office ranking second. Some 74% of the students rank the library as their first or second source, while 50% rank online resources in the same way (see Table 3). Although the mean score of faculty ratings show the Law Library with the highest mean ranking, only 27.2% of the respondents rank it as their first

or second choice while professional gatherings and online sources are both ranked first or second by 45.5% (see Table 4).

For the source in this question entitled "other," students list city and county law libraries most frequently, followed by employers, the courthouse library, legal clinic, Akron Public Library and other university law libraries, in that order. Faculty cite professional publications.

TABLE 3
STUDENT SOURCES OF INFORMATION FOR CLASS AND RESEARCH
(Ranked 1-8 with #1 as the most important)

Information Source	N	Mean Rating	Ranked #1	Ranked #2	Ranked #3	Ranked #4
Law Library	91	2.5	42.9%	31.6%	6.6%	5.5%
Online from home or work	91	4.1	26.4%	24.1%	7.7%	4.3%
Fellow students	91	4.7	9.9%	14.3%	31.9%	3.3%
Professors	91	5.2	9.9%	11.0%	14.3%	17.6%
Other	91	6.9	2.2%	5.5%	9.9%	5.5%
Personal library	91	6.9	2.2%	1.1%	6.6%	6.6%
Bierce Library	91	7.2	0.0%	2.2%	7.7%	4.4%

TABLE 4
FACULTY SOURCES OF PROFESSIONAL AND RESEARCH INFORMATION
(Ranked 1-10 with #1 as the most important)

Information Source	N	Mean Rating	Ranked #1	Ranked #2	Ranked #3	Ranked #4
Law Library	11	2.8	27.2%	0.0%	45.5%	18.1%
Prof gatherings	11	4.1	9.1%	36.4%	18.2%	9.0%
Online from PC	11	4.4	9.1%	36.4%	0.0%	18.2%
School colleagues	11	5.6	18.2%	0.0%	18.2%	9.1%
Personal library	11	6.5	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%
Other attorneys	11	6.5	0.0%	18.2%	9.1%	0.0%
Research assistant	11	7.5	0.0%	9.1%	9.1%	18.2%
Bierce Library	11	8.5	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Other	11	9.2	9.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%

In order to ascertain which formats and types of materials are considered most useful, both groups were asked to rate nine categories of items each on a scale of six to one, with six described as "great use." Lexis and Westlaw online received the highest "N" score of students and are rated far above hard copy materials which are scored the second highest. Microforms are given the lowest rating and judged by 52.5% as having "no use" (see Table 5 which shows the ratings of #6 (highest) and #5 as well as #2 and #1 (lowest)).

By contrast, faculty rate journals and hard copy sources above Lexis/Westlaw online which rank third. On the other end of the scale, like the students, the faculty give microforms the lowest rating and 44.4% judge them to be of "no use" for their needs (see Table 6).

TABLE 5
STUDENT RATINGS OF USEFULNESS OF TYPES AND FORMATS OF MATERIALS
(Rated 6-1 where 6="great use" and 1="no use")

Material	N	Mean Rating	Rated #6	Rated #5	.....	Rated #2	Rated #1
Lexis/Westlaw	91	5.5	64.8%	26.4%	.....	0.0%	1.1%
Hard copy	86	4.4	24.4%	34.9%	.....	8.1%	5.8%
Journals	83	3.9	18.1%	26.5%	.....	13.3%	8.4%
Audio/video	82	3.0	8.5%	11.0%	.....	25.6%	19.5%
CD-Roms	84	2.9	10.7%	9.5%	.....	16.7%	29.8%
Zip/OhioLink	80	2.7	6.3%	6.3%	.....	25.0%	27.5%
Govt. Documents	80	2.6	2.5%	7.5%	.....	20.0%	28.8%
Newspapers	79	2.4	0.0%	6.3%	.....	29.1%	30.4%
Microforms	80	1.8	1.3%	1.3%	.....	25.0%	52.5%

TABLE 6
FACULTY RATINGS OF USEFULNESS OF TYPES AND FORMATS OF MATERIALS
(Rated 6-1 where 6="great use" and 1="no use")

Material	N	Mean Rating	Rated #6	Rated #5	.....	Rated #2	Rated #1
Journals	10	5.3	60.0%	20.0%	.....	0.0%	0.0%
Hard copy	10	4.8	40.0%	20.0%	.....	10.0%	0.0%
Lexis/Westlaw	10	4.3	20.0%	30.0%	.....	10.0%	0.0%
Newspapers	9	4.0	22.2%	22.2%	.....	22.2%	0.0%
Audio/video	9	2.9	0.0%	11.1%	.....	33.3%	11.1%
Govt. Documents	9	2.6	0.0%	0.0%	.....	55.6%	11.1%
CD-Roms	9	2.5	11.1%	11.1%	.....	22.2%	44.4%
Zip/OhioLink	8	2.3	12.5%	0.0%	.....	12.5%	50.0%
Microforms	9	2.0	0.0%	11.1%	.....	33.3%	44.4%

In a similar question, both groups were asked to rate library services on separate six-point scales. Fewer students answered this group of questions than any other, and general reference assistance is rated the highest by far of any of the services listed (see Table 7). Faculty also give general reference assistance high marks, but give equal importance to the journal routing service followed by the purchase request service, the monthly acquisitions list, and audio-visual services, which are all services geared specifically to faculty (see Table 8).

TABLE 7
STUDENT RATINGS OF USEFULNESS OF LIBRARY SERVICES
(Rated 6-1 where 6="great use" and 1="no use")

Service	N	Mean Rating	Rated #6	Rated #5	.....	Rated #2	Rated #1
Gen. ref. assistance	81	4.7	38.3%	18.5%	.....	2.5%	2.5%
Online assistance	72	3.5	18.1%	16.7%	.....	11.1%	20.8%
InterLibrary loan	72	2.6	6.9%	9.7%	.....	12.5%	44.4%
Zip/OhioLink help	73	2.5	6.8%	5.5%	.....	17.8%	42.5%
InterCampus loan	71	2.0	1.4%	4.2%	.....	15.5%	54.9%

TABLE 8
FACULTY RATINGS OF USEFULNESS OF LIBRARY SERVICES
(Rated 6-1 where 6="great use" and 1="no use")

Service	N	Mean Rating	Rated #6	Rated #5	Rated #2	Rated #1
Gen ref assistance	10	4 8	50 0%	20 0%	10 0%	0 0%
Journal routing	10	4 8	40 0%	30 0%	0 0%	10 0%
Purchase request	9	4 7	33 3%	33 3%	11 1%	0 0%
Acquisition list	9	4 0	33 3%	22 2%	11 1%	22 2%
AV services	9	3 4	0 0%	22 2%	22 2%	0 0%
InterLibrary loan	8	3 3	12 5%	0 0%	12 5%	12 5%
Online assistance	8	2 6	12 5%	12 5%	12 5%	50 0%
InterCampus loan	7	2 0	0 0%	0 0%	14 3%	57 1%
Zip/OhioLink help	8	1 6	0 0%	0 0%	25 0%	62 5%

In order to determine the frequency and satisfaction of library use, possible reasons for using the library were listed. Respondents were asked to rate their frequency for using the library for each of these reasons on a five point scale with the anchors "daily," "once a week," "twice a month," "once a month," and "never." They were then asked to rate their satisfaction on a four-point Likert scale. Many of the students and faculty who chose a frequency option of "never" then left the satisfaction scale blank, presumably because they have no basis on which to rate their satisfaction. Others rated their satisfaction as well and left the impression that they never use the library for that specific purpose because of their dissatisfaction. Conversely, some said they are satisfied with options they never use, as though they feel the service is good, but they personally have no use of the library for that purpose. Again, the questions for each target group contain some items unique to that group. See Table 9 for student responses and Table 10 for those of the faculty which shows the highest frequency of use for independent research and a general satisfaction with each item listed.

TABLE 9
STUDENT REASONS FOR LIBRARY USE AND RATINGS OF SATISFACTION

Reasons	Frequency N	Frequency Mean Score	Satisfaction N	Satisfaction Mean Score
Photocopier use	90	2.1	84	2.3
Prepare for class	90	2.5	78	1.6
Lexis/Westlaw use	90	2.8	74	1.3
Study with own materials	88	3.0	61	1.7
Independent research	88	3.1	74	1.7
Use reserved study rooms	91	3.3	78	1.7
Reference librarian help	90	3.4	75	1.6
Peruse periodicals	89	3.7	64	1.8
Help with online searches	89	4.1	51	1.8
Browse collection	87	4.1	61	1.7
Search ZipLink	88	4.2	53	1.9
Search OhioLink	89	4.4	47	1.9
Browse new titles	89	4.6	52	2.0
Use PC's	88	4.5	39	2.5
Microform copies	89	4.7	40	2.0
InterLibrary loan	88	4.7	38	1.8
InterCampus loan	88	4.9	27	2.1

Frequencies based on a 5-point anchored scale where 1 means daily use and 5 means never used
Satisfaction scores based on a 4-point Likert scale where 1 means satisfied and 4 means not satisfied

TABLE 10
FACULTY REASONS FOR LIBRARY USE AND RATINGS OF SATISFACTION

Reasons	Frequency N	Frequency Mean Score	Satisfaction N	Satisfaction Mean Score
Independent research	10	2.7	9	1.8
Prepare for class	10	3.1	8	1.5
Lexis/Westlaw use	10	3.4	4	1.3
Request purchase for collection	9	3.7	7	1.7
Peruse periodicals	9	4.0	6	1.3
InterLibrary loan	10	4.0	7	1.6
Browse new titles	10	4.0	8	1.5
Browse collection	9	4.1	8	1.5
Help with online searches	8	4.1	2	1.0
Search OhioLink	10	4.6	1	1.0
InterCampus loan	10	4.7	2	1.0
Search ZipLink	10	4.7	1	1.0

Frequencies based on a 5 point anchored scale where 1 means daily use and 5 means never used.
Satisfaction scores based on a 4 point Likert scale where 1 means satisfied and 4 means not satisfied

In a third part of this question, comments were requested on any listed items with which there is dissatisfaction. Although no faculty responded to this part, comments received from students reflect the degrees of dissatisfaction noted in Table 9. As this table shows, photocopier use received the highest frequency score and the second lowest rate of satisfaction. Some 31% of the students commented that the photocopiers are unreliable, too expensive, too few in number, or feel the copy card system inefficient. Some feel the student assistants should be better trained in copier maintenance and paper unjamming, and be authorized to refund money, when necessary, especially on evenings and weekends. One percent request the 11"x17" paper capability. One percent mention that the new copiers are a great improvement over the old, but others feel this is still a major problem.

In other issues mentioned, ten percent of the students feel the noise level in the library makes study difficult, especially on the first floor. Sources of noise mentioned are other students talking and the custodians cleaning during library hours. Another dissatisfaction is with the PCs which 12% feel are too few or too old and often have viruses. According to Table 5, this item received the lowest satisfaction rating as well as a low use frequency. Since the PCs were replaced just a few weeks before the questionnaires were distributed, many students were perhaps unaware of this change and the complaint that the PCs are too old is no longer valid. The next item of dissatisfaction relates to the policy on the use of the group study rooms. Seven percent of the respondents feel the two hour use limit should be extended if other students are not waiting to use a room. Other dissatisfactions voiced include the need for more reference help and the difficulty in finding a reference librarian, especially on evenings and weekends, the request for more knowledgeable student assistants, the need for a better selection and more current newspapers and magazines, more private study carrels, more assistance in the Westlaw room, better temperature control throughout the library, the desire for a more convenient entrance through the Law Link atrium and for a place to

snack while studying. Also mentioned was the frustration that interlibrary and intercampus loan is slow when materials are needed immediately.

When asked to comment on areas which they feel to be the library's greatest strengths, 21% of the students listed the reference librarians who are praised by most for their patience, eagerness to help and accuracy with comments such as, "I can ask any stupid question and they always try to help me!" and "They are lifesavers!" Some 8% praised the staff in general for their helpfulness. Twenty-seven percent of the faculty as well commented on the helpful staff and personal assistance they receive. Fifteen percent of students feel the Lexis and Westlaw room, access and training are great strengths. This satisfaction is also reflected in Table 9 which shows this to have the highest rate among the students. In addition, eight percent list the brightness, cleanliness and comfort of the library as a strength. Another 8% praised the collection, and still others mentioned its organization and the prompt reshelving of materials, as did 9% of the faculty. Five percent referred to the quietness of the library in general and 3% feel there are many good study areas. Another 5% cited the independent study rooms in particular as being a great strength.

In order to rate the general effectiveness of the library, the question was asked, "When you go to the Law Library with a specific information need, how often do you find what you're looking for?" Student responses to the options of "always," "usually," "sometimes," "rarely," and "never" are 12.2%, 76.7%, 10.0%, 1.1%, and 0.0%, respectively, for a mean score of 2.0, or "usually." Faculty responses tally as 9.1% for "always," 90.9% for "usually," and 0.0% for "never."

Students were given the opportunity to rate the library holdings with respect to resources in areas of assignment or their general writing requirement. Their responses of "extensive" (12.6%), "good, more than adequate" (63.2%), "fair, barely adequate" (21.8%), and "poor, very limited" (2.3%), show that over three-quarters of the students rate the holdings as good or extensive. Specific areas cited most often as "good" or

"extensive" are case law, government and state materials, reporters, law reviews, constitutional and labor law. Commercial law, civil code, hornbooks and English materials are listed as "fair" or "poor," while others such as sports, international, tax and criminal law are rated differently by different individuals as "extensive," "good," or "fair." Faculty ratings of holdings in their areas of expertise are "extensive" (18.2%), "good" (63.6%), "fair" (18.2%), and "poor" (0.0%). Faculty were not asked to specify their fields since it was feared this would destroy the anonymity of the survey.

One question unique to the faculty survey inquired how often assignments need to be adjusted according to the availability of library resources. Only 9.1% responded that they usually adjust their assignments and this was qualified by mentioning it is when selecting topics for required papers or writing assignments. Another 18.2% responded with "sometimes," 36.4% chose "rarely" and 36.4% selected "never." The fifth choice of "always" was not selected.

In a related question, faculty were offered the same choices of responses to describe how often they provide instruction to their classes on the use of library resources. Although 9.1% said they usually provide instruction, 36.4% said they sometimes do, another 36.4% feel they do so rarely, and 18.2% responded with "never." Again, no one chose the option of "always." One respondent wrote in the margin that, although he never instructs his regular classes, he always instructs his seminar students on library use for research.

Faculty were asked to rate how well they feel their students in general use the resources of the library. As a comparison, students were asked to rate their own use of the library. Both groups were then given the opportunity to list suggestions for improving effective use.

The majority of both groups feel students make good use of the library with good understanding of its resources (see Table 11). However, it is significant to report that almost 21% of the students feel they make poor use of library resources due to a lack of

understanding while none of the faculty recognize this as a problem with their students. The other 3.3% of the students admit minimal use and some qualify this by saying it is due to the inconvenience of library hours and their own time constraints.

TABLE 11
RATINGS OF STUDENT USE OF LIBRARY RESOURCES

Levels of use	Faculty rating of student use	Self-rating by students
Excellent use & understanding	0.0%	13.2%
Good use & understanding	70.0%	62.6%
Poor use due to lack of understanding	0.0%	20.9%
Minimal use - do only what is required	30.0%	3.3%
	100.0%	100.0%

Many suggestions were offered for improving effectiveness of the library. Those given by the most students (26.3%) and faculty relate to more training in basic legal research. The required legal research class had already been completed by all first year day and second year evening students by the time the questionnaire was distributed. However, several students suggested that the class be held in the library to allow more hands-on, practical experience. Others suggested it be combined with their general writing requirement to give a more practical application. Besides the Legal Research class, faculty suggested students be required to do more varied papers involving research in substantive classes. Apart from class work, students and faculty also suggested bibliographic instruction such as mini assignments, the formulation of teaching packages of treatises, cassettes and texts, and small group tours and training in the library for all interested students on new materials, government documents, and specific topics such as AmJur, OJur, and key#'s. A handbook on how to use the library was suggested as well as better directional signs and maps for easily locating sets of materials and new acquisitions.

Another group of suggestions involves increasing library hours, especially during summer, intersession, evenings, and weekends. Coupled with this is the request for more hours of reference help, especially during these times. Many respondents expressed great frustration with undergraduate student assistants who they feel are unable to locate materials and are generally not helpful, especially during the hours when no reference librarian is available. They suggest more training in that area.

When students were asked specifically to describe the student assistants, 15.7% responded with "very helpful," while 60.7% chose "helpful" and 23.6% selected "not helpful." Faculty response to the same question was 20%, 40% and 20%, respectively. The other 20% of the faculty feel they have no contact with student assistants. When confronted with this same question about the library staff, 44.0% of students rate them "very helpful," 53.8% "helpful" and only 2.2% chose "not helpful." Faculty responses were 90% "very helpful", 10% "helpful," and 0% "not helpful."

Both groups were also asked the question, "In general, how would you rate this library in meeting your information/research needs?" In answering the question, respondents were asked to choose a rating on a six point scale where #1 means "excellent" and #6 signifies "poor." A six-point scale was chosen for this question to force a response above or below the midpoint. All of the faculty responded above this midpoint with a mean rating of 2.1. Students gave the library a general rating of 2.6 with 85.5% grading it above the midpoint. (See Table 12.)

TABLE 12
FACULTY AND STUDENT RATINGS OF THE LIBRARY IN GENERAL
(Based on a 6-point scale where =1="excellent" and =6="poor")

Rating	Faculty Rating	Student Rating
=1	10.0%	4.4%
=2	70.0%	53.3%
=3	20.0%	27.8%
=4	0.0%	8.9%
=5	0.0%	5.6%
=6	0.0%	0.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%
Mean Rating	2.1	2.6

Chi square analyses were conducted to determine whether significant relationships exist between student status and their ratings of the library staff, student assistants, holdings, use of the library, and general rating of the library. Chi square values of 7.1 (p=.7), 10.7 (p=.4), 8.4 (p=.9), 15.7 (p=.4), and 13.3 (p=.9), respectively, indicate that these variables are independent of each other.

Similarly, faculty status was compared with faculty ratings of library holdings, the frequency with which faculty feel they must adjust assignments according to the availability of library resources, their frequency of providing instruction on the use of library resources, and their general rating of the library. Again, the Chi square values of 5.5 (p=.7), 10.1 (p=.6), 12.4 (p=.4) and 6.0 (p=.7), respectively, indicate no correlation.

Finally, respondents were asked to look ahead and offer suggestions of ways the library must change to meet future needs. The majority of responses stress the need for remote access and increased computerization which involves more assistance, terminals and printers. More CD materials were requested, especially of the self-help, sample exam and question-and-answer type. Other respondents stressed that even with the

increasing computerization and online sources, it is necessary to increase acquisitions of hard copy materials, carry more form books and practical how-to guides, and maintain multiple sets of high usage volumes.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Results of this survey clearly show the importance of the Law Library as a resource in meeting the informational and research needs of both students and faculty. This library rates far above remote online sources which are considered the next most important in the eyes of the students. Both groups generally feel positive toward their library and its resources, and, as had been previously found in a study of an academic library (Schloman, Lilly, and Hu 1989) were even more satisfied with its librarians. However, this study also shows that many sources and services are underutilized or considered by the majority to be of little or no use. Newsletters or better signage may help with this problem, as suggested by some respondents and implicated by others, who, when asked how frequently they browse new titles responded with answers such as "What new titles?"

Student attitudes towards the importance of library services in general are illustrated by the fact that fewer students answered this question than any other. However, both students and faculty rate general reference assistance as the service they personally find the most important. This is also the service with which they are most satisfied although some expressed the frustration that reference librarians are often not available on weekends and during summer and intersession and undergraduate student assistants are not able to provide adequate assistance.

Services which show the greatest underutilization according to this survey are assistance with OhioLink and the University of Akron online catalog (ZipLink). Coupled with this are the low ratings for InterLibrary and InterCampus loans. Although faculty make the most use of these loan services according to their ratings, the importance of the resources available from other libraries is underrated by the majority of students. Perhaps this is because students feel they cannot wait to obtain the loaned materials when

assignments are due. However, the vast resources available through OCLC and OhioLink are lost to the students when they go unused.

The format of materials which shows the greatest underutilization is microforms, which were given the lowest or second lowest rating on a six point scale of importance by over 77% of students and faculty. This is an alarming figure considering the growing need for libraries to rely on microform formats for government documents, back issues of journals and other materials due to the lack of shelf space, cost of paper and preservation issues. Perhaps this situation can be improved by better familiarizing students and faculty with the equipment and resources available to them in this format.

Another category of materials which received low scores of importance is government documents to which 48.8% of the students and 66.7% of faculty gave the lowest or second lowest ratings on the same six-point scale. Perhaps these groups are unaware of the vast array of information available in the government documents collection and more instruction in this area could improve their effective use.

Both target groups responded that bibliographic instruction in the use of specific resources in the form of small group classes, tours, printed guides and independent study materials would be invaluable in increasing students' effective use of the library.

In this information-rich age, students and faculty must be able to make full use of their library and its many print, microform and electronic resources to prepare them for the future.

APPENDIX A

FACULTY QUESTIONNAIRE

STUDENT QUESTIONNAIRE

UNIVERSITY OF AKRON SCHOOL OF LAW LIBRARY
FACULTY SURVEY

Please mark the best answer to each of the following questions.

1. Including academic year 1994/1995, for how many years have you been on the faculty of the University of Akron School of Law?

1-4_____ 5-8_____ 9-12_____ 13-16_____ 17-20_____ 20+_____

2. Where do you usually get needed professional or research information? (Please check all that apply and rank in order with #1 being the most important.)

	Check	Ranking
a. Colleagues in the Law School	_____	_____
b. Other attorneys	_____	_____
c. Professional gatherings	_____	_____
d. Personal library	_____	_____
e. Univ of Akron Law Library	_____	_____
f. Univ of Akron Bierce Library	_____	_____
g. Research assistant	_____	_____
h. Online from personal computer	_____	_____
i. Other library or source (Please specify)	_____	_____

_____

3. When you go to the Law Library with a specific information need, how often do you find what you're looking for?

Always_____ Usually_____ Sometimes_____ Rarely_____ Never_____

4. How would you describe the library's holdings with respect to materials/resources in your area(s) of expertise?

____ Extensive
____ Good, more than adequate
____ Fair, barely adequate
____ Poor, very limited

5. How often do you plan or adjust your assignments to the availability of library resources?

Always_____ Usually_____ Sometimes_____ Rarely_____ Never_____

Give an example,
if you wish_____

6. How often do you provide instruction to your classes on the use of library resources?

Always_____ Usually_____ Sometimes_____ Rarely_____ Never_____

7. For each item below, please rate your satisfaction and check the appropriate frequency of your use of this library...

	Daily	Once a week	Twice a month	Once a month	Never	Satisfied? Yes	Satisfied? No
a. To browse the collection	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
b. To browse new titles	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
c. To peruse newspapers or journals	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
d. To prepare for class	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
e. For independent research	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
f. To request purchase for collection	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
g. For Inter-Library loan request	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
h. For Inter-campus loan request	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
i. To search Lexis/Westlaw	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
j. To search OhioLink	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
k. To search ZipLink	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
l. For assistance in above searches	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4

Please comment on any items above with which you are dissatisfied.

_____

_____

Please comment on the area(s) which you find to be the library's greatest strength(s).

_____

_____

8. In general, how would you rate this library in meeting your information/research needs?

Excellent Poor

1 2 3 4 5 6

9. What types and formats of materials do you find most useful in your research and class preparation?

	Great Use					No Use
Newspapers	6	5	4	3	2	1
Journals	6	5	4	3	2	1
Govt Documents collection	6	5	4	3	2	1
Ziplink or OhioLink.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Lexis/Westlaw online	6	5	4	3	2	1
CD-Roms	6	5	4	3	2	1
Microfiche or film	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hard copy cases, treatises, etc.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Audio/video tapes	6	5	4	3	2	1

10. Which library services do you find most useful?

Interlibrary loan	6	5	4	3	2	1
Inter-Campus library loan	6	5	4	3	2	1
General reference assistance	6	5	4	3	2	1
Assistance with Zip or OhioLink.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Assistance with other online or CD-Rom sources	6	5	4	3	2	1
Journal routing service	6	5	4	3	2	1
Collection purchase request	6	5	4	3	2	1
Monthly acquisitions list	6	5	4	3	2	1
Audio-visual services	6	5	4	3	2	1
Other (Please specify)	6	5	4	3	2	1

_____

11. In general, how well do you feel your students use the resources available in the library?

_____ Excellent use and understanding of resources
_____ Good use and understanding
_____ Poor use due to lack of understanding of resources
_____ Minimal use - do only what is required to get by

12. What methods would you suggest for improving students' effective use of the library? Use back if necessary.

_____

13. In general, how would you describe the student assistants in the library?

Very helpful_____ Helpful_____ Not helpful_____ No contact with assistants_____

14. In general, how would you describe the library staff?

Very helpful_____ Helpful_____ Not helpful_____

15. In what ways could the library change to better meet your present research needs?

_____

16. In what ways could you envision the library changing to meet your future research needs? Please use back if necessary.

_____

17. Please use the back to comment on any of the above or other library issues.

Thank you for your cooperation. Please return survey in the attached envelope to the Law Library circulation desk or deposit in campus mail.

UNIVERSITY OF AKRON SCHOOL OF LAW LIBRARY
STUDENT SURVEY

Please mark the best answer to each of the following questions.

1. What is your student status at the University of Akron School of Law for the 1994/95 academic year? Joint degree candidate? yes___no___

Day Student	Evening Student
1st year _____	1st year _____
2nd year _____	2nd year _____
3rd year _____	3rd year _____
	4th year _____

2. Where do you usually get needed information for class assignments or research? (Please check all that apply and rank in order with #1 being the most important.)

	Check	Ranking
a. Fellow law students	_____	_____
b. Law School professors	_____	_____
c. Personal library	_____	_____
d. Online from home or work	_____	_____
e. Univ of Akron Law Library	_____	_____
f. Univ of Akron Bierce Library	_____	_____
g. Other library or source (Please specify)	_____	_____

_____

3. What types and formats of materials do you find most useful in your research and class work?

	Great Use					No Use
Newspapers	6	5	4	3	2	1
Journals	6	5	4	3	2	1
Govt Documents collection	6	5	4	3	2	1
ZipLink or OhioLink	6	5	4	3	2	1
Lexis/Westlaw online	6	5	4	3	2	1
CD-Roms	6	5	4	3	2	1
Microfiche or film	6	5	4	3	2	1
Hard copy cases, treatises, etc.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Audio/video tapes	6	5	4	3	2	1

4. Which library services do you find most useful?

Interlibrary loan	6	5	4	3	2	1
Inter-Campus library loan	6	5	4	3	2	1
Assistance with Zip or OhioLink.	6	5	4	3	2	1
Assistance with other online or CD-Rom sources	6	5	4	3	2	1
General reference assistance	6	5	4	3	2	1
Other (Please specify)	6	5	4	3	2	1

_____

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

5. For each item below, please rate your satisfaction and check the appropriate frequency of your use of this library...

	Daily	Once a week	Twice a month	Once a month	Never	Satisfied? Yes	No
a. To browse the collection	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
b. To browse new titles	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
c. To peruse newspapers or journals	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
d. To prepare for class	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
e. For independent research	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
f. For help from reference librarian	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
g. For Inter-Library loan request	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
h. For Inter-campus loan request	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
i. To search Lexis/Westlaw	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
j. To search OhioLink	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
k. To search ZipLink	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
l. For assistance in above searches	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
m. To use PCs	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
n. For photocopier use	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
o. For microform copies	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
p. To study using non-library materials	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4
q. To use reserved study rooms	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	1 2	3 4

Please comment on items above with which you are dissatisfied.

_____

_____

Please comment on the area(s) which you find to be the library's greatest strength(s).

_____

_____

6. When you go to the Law Library with a specific information need, how often do you find what you're looking for?

Always_____ Usually_____ Sometimes_____ Rarely_____ Never_____

7. How would you describe the library's holdings with respect to resources in your areas of assignment or general writing requirement?

____ Extensive
____ Good, more than adequate
____Fair, barely adequate
____Poor, very limited

To which areas are you referring? _____

8. In general, how well do you feel you use the resources available in the library?

_____ Excellent use and understanding of resources
_____ Good use and understanding
_____ Poor use due to lack of understanding of resources
_____ Minimal use - do only what is required to get by

9. What methods would you suggest for improving effective use of the library? Please use back, if necessary.

_____

10. In general, how would you describe the student assistants in the library?

Very helpful_____ Helpful_____ Not helpful_____

11. In general, how would you describe the library staff?

Very helpful_____ Helpful_____ Not helpful_____

12. In general, how would you rate this library in meeting your information/research needs?

Excellent Poor

1 2 3 4 5 6

13. In what ways could you envision the library changing to meet future needs? Use back, if necessary.

_____

_____

14. Please use back to comment on any of the above or other library issue.

Thank you for your cooperation in completing this survey. Please return your questionnaire to a marked box located at the Law Library circulation desk or near the student mailboxes.

APPENDIX B

FACULTY COVER LETTER

STUDENT COVER LETTER

School of Library and Information Science
(216) 672-2782
Fax 216-672-7965

Kent STATE UNIVERSITY
P. O. Box 5190 Kent, Ohio 44242-0001

Re: University of Akron School of Law Library Survey

December 8, 1994

Dear School of Law Faculty Member,

I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University and an intern in the serials and acquisitions department of the University of Akron School of Law Library. As part of the requirements for my master's degree, I am conducting a study about law student and faculty perceptions and use of the School of Law library. The attached questionnaire is designed to identify strengths in the library program and services and elicit information about how the library may better meet your needs as a faculty member and those of your students.

Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed as questionnaires are not signed. Information collected will be tallied and written comments compiled into a report which may be used by the librarians and staff in future planning. A copy of this report will be available upon request.

While participation in this study is voluntary, wide participation is essential for the validity of the results and success of the study. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Your cooperation is appreciated.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 972-5987 or MFREY@KENTVM.KENT.EDU or Dr. Lois Buttlar, my research advisor, at 672-2782. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University you may contact Dr. Eugene Wenninger, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at 672-2851.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. Please return your questionnaire in the attached envelope to the Law Library circulation desk or through campus mail.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Frey

Marguerite Frey
Graduate Student

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School of Library and Information Science
(216) 672-2782
Fax 216-672-7965

Kent STATE UNIVERSITY
P.O. Box 5190 Kent, Ohio 44242-0001

Re: University of Akron School of Law Library Survey

January 20, 1995

Dear School of Law Student,

I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University and an intern in the serials and acquisitions department of the University of Akron School of Law Library. As part of the requirements for my master's degree, I am conducting a study about law student and faculty perceptions and use of the School of Law library. The attached questionnaire is designed to identify strengths in the library program and services and elicit information about how the library may better meet your needs as a law student.

Confidentiality and anonymity are guaranteed as questionnaires are not signed. Information collected will be tallied and written comments compiled into a report which may be used by the librarians and staff in future planning. A copy of this report will be available on request.

While your participation in this study is voluntary, wide participation is essential for the validity of the results and success of the study. You may refuse to participate or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Your cooperation is appreciated.

If you have any questions, please contact me at 972-5987 or MFREY@KENTVM.KENT.EDU or Dr. Lois Buttlar, my research advisor, at 672-2782. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University you may contact Dr. Eugene Wenninger, Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, at 672-2851.

Thank you very much for your cooperation. Please return your questionnaire to a marked box located at the Law Library circulation desk or near the student mailboxes.

Sincerely,

Marguerite Frey

Marguerite Frey
Graduate Student

REFERENCE LIST

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